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INDEX

GENERAL ARTICLES

	PAGE
Alternatives, The	4
An Alarming Verdict	349
An International Starvation Race	138
Another Happy Ending	52
Articulate Africa	417
Australian Labour Parties, The	485
Butt-Gatherer, The	418
Canada in the Great Depression	570
Chance	536
Congress Party, The	382
Crime and Publicity	380
De Profundis	141
Earthquake, The	571
Edge of the Precipice, The	569
Education, The Next Step	5
English Lecturer in America, The	101
Experiences to Look Back On	176
Fascist Terror, The	637
Form of Socialisation, The	638
France, Germany and Ourselves	208
Free Trade : Negative and Positive	272
Gentleman, The	139
Germany and the League	484
Golden Wedding	275
Good Tax Gone Wrong, A	381
Gramophone Notes	76, 194, 336, 521
Gregory Powder	568
Hitler's Troops at Work	174
Happy Horse, The	641
Importance of Mr. Gandhi, The	313
India's New Millions	534
International Starvation Race, An	138
Is There Room ?	488
Labour Party and the Future, The	96
Laughter and Tears	600
Lie-Detector, The	100
Longest Sermon, The	604
Max on the War Path	416
Meaning, The	56
Mr. Baldwin and Lord Rothermere	136
Mr. Hoover's Medicine	636
Mr. Justice Holmes	55
Mr. Snowden—Optimist	348
Mr. Snowden's Problem	172
Our Reply to Lord Beaverbrook	452
Plays and Pictures : 17, 65, 108, 149, 220, 253, 284, 323, 359, 391, 427, 463, 496, 514, 544, 579, 613, 648	
Present Position in Biology, The	384
Prison for the Poor	241
Public Control	312
?	351
Question of Class, A	58
Salmon	640
Scandals of the Dole, The	638
Should We Nationalise the Railways ?	533
Some Great Wave of Common Sense	243
Spain in Revolution	314
Spanish Republic, The	273
Storm over the Moray Firth	177
Tailor Orders His Tomb, The	9
Taking Criticism Well	211
Time Flies	383
Town and Country Planning	173
Trade, Politics and Agriculture	455
War and the Next Generation	240
Weather : An Explanation, The	456
What's Wrong in the Professions ? I.—The Church	601
Will Spain Go Bolshevik ?	532
Wrong Argument, A	315

SIGNED ARTICLES AND SKETCHES

Adirondacks, The	Supp. 30.5.31	501
All About Books		14
All Fools' Day		182
Anti-Bolshevik Creed, The		137
Arnold Bennett		217
Artist and the Gentleman, The		183
Backward Colony, A		605
Beecham's Russian Season		494
Byzantine Art,		610
Canada	Supp. 30.5.31	500
Composers and Critics		283
Composers and Critics		389
Council of State, A		7
Coventry Patmore	Supp. 28.3.31	v
Dawn at Burlington House		390
Decline in French Novel-Reading, The		321
Der Rosenkavalier at Covent Garden		358
Desire under the Elms		62
Does the Dole Cause Unemployment ?		602
Economic Notes on Free Trade. I.—The Export Industries		175
Economic Notes on Free Trade. II.—A Revenue Tariff and the Cost of Living		211
Economic Notes on Free Trade. III.—The Reaction of Imports on Exports		242
Enter the Anti-Christ		147
Escape		495
Expert and the Amateur, The		426
Farmland Figures of Old Time		317
Florence Kahn		425
Footwear		537
Four Georges, The		107
Freedom of the B.B.C., The		209
Free Speech in Childhood		486
Glinka and Verdi		577
Greek Chorus, The		646
Group Pension Schemes	Supp. 23.5.31	vi
Hairy Ape or Bronze Ajax ?		461
Hanging		97
Hard Divorces and Soft Drinks		573
Imperial Gallery		218
In Spain : Cabbages and Kings		8
Ireland	Supp. 30.5.31	501
Italy's Two Fathers		454
Karl the Great		492
Last of the Laissez-Fairists, The		6
Lesson from History, A		10
Life Assurance Protection—A Present-Day Necessity	Supp. 28.5.31	iv
Little More, The		282
London Sights		148
Milton and Prynne		15
Mr. Aldous Huxley, The Stage and the Spirits		251
Mr. Rammer		462
Music of Automata and Adolescents, The		63
Mysteries of Insurance, The	Supp. 23.5.31	iii
Old Man's Love, An		357
On The Road	Supp. 28.2.31	vii
Opera Librettos		647

SIGNED ARTICLES AND SKETCHES—*continued.*

		PAGE
Pin-Pricks of Publicity	Supp. 9.5.31	viii
Political Proposal, A		210
Président de Brosses, The—I		250
Président de Brosses, The—II		281
Price of a Holiday, The	Supp. 30.5.31	504
Proposals for a Revenue Tariff		53
R101		244
Rat's Appeal, A		611
Reflections in a Mirror		577
Reply to Mr. Keynes, A		98
Return to Prosperity or the Pretended War, The		54
Root of the Evil and Its Cure, The	Supp. 30.5.31	499
Royal William		64
Salome		542
Shakespeare's Supers	Supp. 28.2.31	x
"The Skill-Hungry Man"		276
Slooter's Vengeance	Supp. 28.3.31	vi
Some Worldly Advice on Motor Insurance	Supp. 23.5.31	viii
Squeak and Gibber		106
Tax is Proposed on, A		427
Threat to German Culture, The		349
Town and Country		419
Tragic Carpet, The		284
Travel Book Week, A	Supp. 30.5.31	506
Two Kingdoms	Supp. 30.5.31	500
Up the Rhine	Supp. 30.5.31	502
Very Free Press, A		352
Why We Should *Not* Reduce Wages		453
Wisdom of the Countryside, The		57
Words and Music		219
World Economy, A		274

VERSE

Blessed Island, The		544
Burial of the Spirit of a Young Poet		149
Cortona		220
Elegy on the Death of Mme. Anna Pavlova	Supp. 28.2.31	vii
Hymn to Light	Supp. 9.5.31	vii
Kiss, The		17
Love Returned, A		185
Making a Fire		17
Moonlight, Young Monkey Street		108
Mochizuki: Moonlight		579
Namaqualand after Rain		391
Obruerunt		494
Ranciad, The		646
Resurrection		508
Spinner, The		185
Summer-Time		323
There is a Dignity in Death		65
To Robert-Caroline on the Eve of the Census		359

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Agar, H.:
The English Lecturer in America, 101; The Adirondacks, Supp. 30.5.31, 501; Hard Divorces and Soft Drinks, 573; Lenin .. 618

Bates, H. E.:
On the Road .. Supp. 28.2.31 vii

Benson, Stella:
Reflections in a Mirror .. 577

Bensusan, S. L.:
The Wisdom of the Countryside, 57; Farmland Figures of Old Time, 317; Trade, Politics and Agriculture, 455; A Backward Colony .. 605

Binyon, Laurence:
Wordsworth Re-valued .. Supp. 28.2.31 xiv

Birrell, Augustine:
The Analyst of Moods, Supp. 28.2.31, xii; Elizabeth Fry on the Continent .. 515

Birrell, Francis:
A Provincial Zola, Supp. 9.5.31, xvi; A Dutchman on the English .. 582

Blunden, Edmund:
The Kiss, 17; A Practical Wordsworthian .. 652

Bonnard, Augusta:
Footwear .. 537

Brailsford, H. N.:
The Dancing Girl of Sind .. 543

Brereton, Geoffrey:
In Spain: Cabbages and Kings .. 8

Brown, Frederick:
Does the Dole Cause Unemployment? .. 602

Caliban:
Playtime, 36, 80, 126, 164, 198, 230, 264, 298, 340, 372, 404, 440, 476, 524, 558, 590, 626 .. 674

"Cariocan":
Life Assurance Protection—A Present-Day Necessity, Supp. 23.5.31 .. iv

Church, Richard:
Wilfred Owen, 256; London .. 508

Clarke, Austin:
New Poems .. 652

Cole, G. D. H.:
Education, the Next Step, 5; The Labour Party and the Future, 96; Mr. Snowden's Problem, 172; Free Trade: Negative and Positive, 272; Public Control, 312; Mr. Snowden—Optimist, 348; Why We Should *Not* Reduce Wages, 453; Should We Nationalise the Railways? 533; The Scandals of the Dole, 638; The Form of Socialisation .. 638

Craig, E. Gordon:
Mr. Hicks on the Theatre .. 651

Davenport, E. H.:
The Mysteries of Insurance .. Supp. 23.5.31 iii

Davey, Norman:
Pin-Pricks of Publicity .. Supp. 9.5.31 viii

Davidson, R. E.:
About Motoring: A Heretic on Running Costs, 34; Engine Oil, 78; Self-Changing Gears, 124; These Low Bodies, 162; The Sins of Motorists, 196; The Justification of Car Ownership, 228; Armageddon, 262; The Star Saloon, 296; The Poor Man's Motorcycle, 338; Motor Caravan Holidays, 370; The Hillman Wizard, 400; The M.G. Cars, 438; Another Patent Gearbox, 474; Taking a Car Abroad, 522; A Self-Changing Gear on the Road, 556; Brooklands Motor Track, 588; The 25 h.p. Rolls-Royce, 624; The H. F. Car Tester .. 672

Davies, A. Emil:
The Return to Prosperity or the Pretended War .. 54

Dearmer, Geoffrey:
There is a Dignity in Death, 65; Death in Life, Supp. 9.5.31 .. xiv

De La Mare, Walter:
Making a Fire .. 17

Driberg, J. H.:
Articulate Africa .. 417

INDEX OF AUTHORS—*continued.*

PAGE

Durham, M.E.:
A Very Free Press 352
Durkan, John:
Resurrection 508

Earp, T.W.:
Persian Guides, Supp. 28.2.31, xviii; The Four Georges, 107; Imperial Gallery, 218; The Little More, 282; Through the Keyhole, 364; Dawn at Burlington House, 390; Escape .. 495
Ensor, R. C. K.:
A Tale Partly Told 223

Farbman, Michael:
The Anti-Bolshevik Creed 137
Forster, E. M.:
The Freedom of the B.B.C. 209
Fremantle, Anne:
D. H. Lawrence, 328; *Obruerunt*, 494; Byzantine Art 610

Garratt, G. T.:
The Importance of Mr. Gandhi, 313; The Congress Party, 382; India's New Millions 534
Gates, Barrington:
The Open Conspiracy—Act II, 112; R101 .. 244
Grierson, Flora:
Reviewers in Retrospect 617
Gwynn, Stephen:
The Making of Ireland 70
Guedalla, Philip:
Arma Virumque 153

Hammond, J. L.:
A Lesson from History, 10; The Potters' Trade Unions, 153; Town and Country 419
Hancock, W. K.:
The Australian Labour Parties 485
Herklots, H. G. G.:
A Political Proposal 210
Hobson, J. A.:
A World Economy 274
Hughes, Richard:
Burial of the Spirit of a Young Poet 149
Huxley, Aldous:
Squeak and Gibber 106

Ibbetson, Peter:
A Council of State 7
Irvine, Lyn Ll.:
Caroline Again 189

Jeffery, Jeffery E.:
A Travel Book Week .. .. Supp. 30.5.31 506
Jones, A.:
Prison for the Poor 241

Kellett, E. E.:
The Great Proconsul 364
Keynes, J. M.:
Proposals for a Revenue Tariff, 53; Economic Notes on Free Trade. I. The Export Industries, 175; II. A Revenue Tariff and the Cost of Living, 211; III. The Reaction of Imports on Exports 242
Kumleben, G.:
Hitler's Troops at Work 174

Laski, H.:
Mr. Justice Holmes 55
Lawrence, W. J.:
Shakespeare's Supers, Supp. 28.2.31, x; The Tragic Carpet 284
Lloyd, C. M.:
Another Happy Ending, 52; Town and Country Planning, 173; France, Germany, and Ourselves, 208; Spain in Revolution, 314; A Good Tax Gone Wrong, 381; Germany and the League, 484; The Edge of the Precipice, 569; Laughter and Tears, 600; Mr. Hoover and Medicine 636
Lynd, R.:
The Tailor Orders his Tomb, 9; The Meaning, 56; The Lie-Detector, 100; The Gentleman, 139; Experiences to Look Back On, 176; Taking Criticism Well, 211; Some Great Wave of Common Sense, 243; Golden Wedding, 275; A Wrong Argument, 315; ?, 351; Time Flies, 383; The Butt-Gatherer, 418; The Weather: An Explanation, 456; Is There Room? 488; Chance, 536; The Earthquake, 571; The Longest Sermon, 604; The Happy Horse .. 641

PAGE

Macaulay, Rose:
Coventry Patmore .. .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 v
MacCarthy, Desmond:
Desire under the Elms, 62; Mr. Aldous Huxley, The Stage and the Spirits, 251; An Old Man's Love, 357; Hairy Ape or Bronze Ajax, 461; *Salome*, 542; The Greek Chorus 646
MacFlecknoe:
The Burden of Disarmament, 12; A Question of Class, 58; Saviours of Society, 102; Petter the Portent, 142; The Die-Hards, 178; Coda da Gallo, 213; A Simpleton Looks at Politics, 245; The Logic of Security, 277; A Vacation Exercise, 318; The Relapse, 353; Also Ran, 385; The Voice of the Country, 420; The Isolationist, 458; The Scale of Values, 489; To the "Lost Tribe" of Indigirka, 538; Undeveloped Land, 574; The Pruning Hook .. 606
Mackenzie, Agnes Mure:
England, Supp. 28.3.31, viii; Plus Ça Change Supp. 9.5.31 x
Malinowski, B.:
Native Africa 116
Marlowe, Christopher:
The Price of a Holiday .. .. Supp. 30.5.31 504
Marsyas:
Pin-pricks of Publicity .. .. Supp. 9.5.31 viii
Martin, Kingsley:
The Alternatives, 4; Mr. Baldwin and Lord Rothermere, 136; War and the Next Generation, 240; An Alarming Verdict, 349; Crime and Publicity, 380; The Man in the Street, 395; Max on the Warpath, 416; The Great Man, 431; Our Reply to Lord Beaverbrook, 452; Will Spain Go Bolshevik? 532; Gregory Powder 568
Maunsell, A. E. Lloyd:
The Spinner 185
Maurice, H. G.:
A Rat's Appeal 611
Mayne, Ethel Colburn:
An Imperial Tragedy .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 vii
Meyerstein, E. H. W.:
Elegy on the Death of Mme. Anna Pavlova Supp. 28.2.31 vii
Miles, Hamish:
New Novels 615
More, J. W.:
Group Pension Schemes .. .. Supp. 23.5.31 vi
Morrow, H. L.:
Ireland .. .. Supp. 30.5.31 501
Mortimer, Raymond:
The Case Against Macaulay, Supp. 9.5.31, x; Bülow 467

Nevinson, Henry W.:
First President, 22; Hanging, 97; "The Skill-Hungry Man" 276

Olivier, Lord:
The Blessed Island, 544; Timber Labour in Russia 581
O'Riordan, Conal:
I (gnis), F (atuus) .. .. .. Supp. 28.2.31 xvi

Partridge, Eric:
All Fools' Day 182
Phillips, Gordon:
Enter the Anti-Christ 147
Pier, Florida:
London Sights 148
Plomer, William:
Cherry-Blossom and Earthquake, Supp. 28.3.31, xii; *Namaqualand after Rain* 391
Prescott, H. F. M.:
Moonlight, Young Monkey Street, 108; *Mochizuki: Moonlight* 579
Pritchett, V. S.:
Slooter's Vengeance .. .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 vi
Proteus:
New Novels, 26, 68, 111, 152, 188, 287, 325, 362, 394, 466 547

INDEX OF AUTHORS—*continued.*

PAGE

Purdie, A. W. Cairns :
Some Worldly Advice on Motor Insurance Supp. 23.5.31 viii

Pyke, Richard :
Karl the Great 492

Ratcliffe, S. K. :
Canada, Supp. 30.5.31, 500 ; William Archer .. 581
Richardson, J. M. :
A Tax is Proposed On 427
Robbins, Lionel : 98
A Reply to Mr. Keynes 98
Roberts, A. C. :
Italy's Two Fathers 454
Roberts, Harry :
The Myths and Mysteries of Medicine 363
Roberts, R. Ellis :
Short Stories, Supp. 28.3.31, x ; Arnold Bennett, 217 ; The Spanish Republic, 273 ; Florence Kahn 425
Russell, Bertrand :
Free Speech in Childhood 486
Rutter, Eldon :
The Arabian Desert 583
Rylands, George :
Summer-Time 323

Satterthwaite, Alfred :
Mr. Rammer 462
Saunders, Miss :
The Fascist Terror 637
Scott, Miss H. :
An International Starvation Race 138
Scott-James, R. A. :
The Complete Epicurean, 24 ; The Shade of Sheridan, 223 ; The Muse of Mr. Tomlinson .. 466
Sharp, Evelyn :
The Threat to German Culture 349
Smyth, Dame Ethel :
Composers and Critics 389
Squire, J. C. :
A Love Returned 185
Stonier, G. W. :
A Critic on a Tower, Supp. 9.5.31, xiv ; Up the Rhine, Supp. 30.5.31, 502 ; Swinburne .. 658
Strachey, Lytton :
The Président de Brosses—I, 250 ; The Président de Brosses—II 281
Strong, L. A. G. :
Great Gulliver 288
Struther, Jan :
To Robert-Caroline on the Eve of the Census .. 359
Stuart, Dorothy Margaret :
Milton and Prynne, 15 ; Edmund Gosse 256
Sunne, Richard :
Books in General, 20, 67, 110, 151, 187, 222, 255, 286, 324, 361, 393, 429, 465, 513, 546, 580, 614 .. 650

Thomson, G. M. :
Storm Over the Moray Firth, 177 ; Two Kingdoms .. .. .. Supp. 30.5.31 500
Toreador :
The Week in the City, 40, 84, 128, 166, 200, 232, 266, 300, 342, 374, 406, 442, Supp. 23.5.31, x, 526, 560, 592, 628 676
Trevelyan, R. C. :
Cortona 220
Turner, W. J. :
The Music of Automata and Adolescents, 63 ; The Artist and the Gentleman, 183 ; Words and Music, 219 ; Composers and Critics, 283 ; *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden, 358 ; *Hymn to Light*, Supp. 9.5.31, viii ; The Expert and the Amateur, 426 ; Beecham's Russian Season, 494 ; The Greatness of Verdi, 548 ; Glinka and Verdi, 577 ; Opera Librettos 647

Underhill, F. H. :
Canada in the Great Depression 570

Villard, Oswald Garrison :
Last of the Laissez-Fairists, The 6

Wallas, Graham :
L. T. Hobhouse 326
Ware, Fabian :
The Root of the Evil and its Cure Supp. 30.5.31 499
Warner, Oliver :
Royal William 64
Williams, Orlo :
The Decline in French Novel-Reading 321
Wolfe, Humbert :
The Ranciad 646
Woolf, Leonard :
Russia and the Russians, 22 ; The Tragic Comedian 547
Woolf, Virginia :
All About Books 14

REVIEWS

Above the Dark Circus. *Walpole* 76
Abraham Cowley, the Muses's Hannibal. *Nethercot* .. 156
Across Africa on Foot. *Monson* 332
Adjustments. *Hart* 287
Africa View. *Huxley* 154
Alarms and Excursions in Arabia. *Thomas* 583
Allied Secret Service in Greece, The. *Thomson* 225
All Passion Spent. *Sackville-West* 547
Ambrose Holt and Family. *Glaspell* 325
An Angel in the Room. *Hopkins* 68
André Maurois. *Larg* 120
Apostate, The. *Lidin* 394
Arfon. *Davies* .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 x
Art of Egypt through the Ages, The. Edited *Ross.* Supp. 9.5.31 xx
Austrian Tyrol, The. *Morrow* 668
Azrael. *Lloyd* 652

Babe's Bed, The. *Wescott* .. .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 x
Back Street. *Hurst* 26
Bark House Days. *Fullerton* 472
Berkeley's Commonplace Book. Edited *Johnston.* Supp. 28.2.31 xx
Between Ourselves. *Hicks* 651
Between the River and the Hills. *Huddleston* 72
Big Man, The. *Strong* .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 x
Bird Life in Devon. *White* 396
Bird Life in England. *Kearton* 396
Birds of Jesmond Dene. *Noble* 586
Blood and Celluloid. *Jacob* 32
Blue Ghost. *Temple* 670
Boom in Florida. *Weigall* .. .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 xiv
Brave Employments. *Bowen* 287
Bridal Pond. *Gale* .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 x
Bring 'Em Back Alive. *Buck and Anthony* 32
British Banks and the Finance of Industry. *Thomas* .. 434
Buckingham Palace. *Smith* 76
Bulwer : A Panorama. Edward and Rosina, 1803–1836. *Sadleir* .. .. Supp. 9.5.31 x
Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. Edited *Bell and Jordan-Smith* .. .. Supp. 28.2.81 xii
Burton : Arabian Nights Adventurer. *Downey* 520
Bux : A Story of a Circus. *Possendorf* 160
By Whose Authority. *Hueffer* 668

Career of Julian Stanley-Williams, The. *Alington* .. 514
Castle Island. *Mottram* 466
Cats' Meat and Kings. *Baker* .. .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 x
Censored : The Private Life of the Movies. *Ernst* and *Lorentz* .. .. Supp. 28.3.31 xvi
Changing Fabric of Japan, The. *Kennedy* .. Supp. 28.3.31 xii
Charles Reade. *Elwin* .. .. Supp. 9.5.31 xvi
Charlotte Corday. *Corday* 660
Charlotte's Row. *Bates* 400
Chaucer. *Masefield* 470
Chorus to Adventurers. *Pollock* 332
Cinderella's Daughter. *Erskine* 188
Circus Nights and Circus Days. *Kober* 400
City Keep, The. *Malam* 287
Cleopatra : A Royal Voluptuary. *Wertheimer* 588
Clive. *Minney* 586
Collected Poems. *Booth* 672
Collected Satires and Poems of Osbert Sitwell, The .. 660
Colonel Hawker's Shooting Diaries. Edited *Parker* .. 622
Colonel's Daughter, The. *Aldington* 550
Come, Julia. *Granville-Barker* 152
Conflict : Angora to Afghanistan. *Forbes* 509
Congo Gods. *Lütken* 111

REVIEWS—*continued.*

	PAGE
Constantine the Great. *Baker*	122
Conversation with a Cat, and Others. *Belloc*	294
Cooking Through the Centuries. *Ainsworth-Davis*	434
Copper City. *Brinig*	430
Corn King and the Spring Queen, The. *Mitchison*	514
Crossroads of the Java Sea. *Leeuw*	554
Das Rote Russland. *Seibert*	618
Dawn, The. *Edwards*	258
Dear Lovers. *Moore*	362
Decorative Art	521
Delicate Situation, The. *Royde-Smith*	325
Demons of the Dust. *Wheeler*	122
Dermotts Rampant. *McKenna*	68
Descriptive Sociology or Groups of Sociological Facts, Arranged *Spencer*	116
Donjon of Demons. *Fitzpatrick*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
Drama in English, The. *Eaton*	436
Dream of Fair Women, The. *Williamson*	615
Dreyfus. *Steinthal*	114
Dynamic Universe, The. *Mackaye*	Supp. 9.5.31 xviii
Each Stands Alone. *Wellings*	111
East of the Hudson. *Atkinson*	194
Economic Fragments. *Robertson*	554
Economic Life of Soviet Russia, The. *Hoover*	292
Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World, The. *D'Abernon*	433
Elizabeth Fry's Journeys on the Continent (1840–1841), *Gurney*	515
Endless Adventure, The. *Oliver*	662
"England Arise." *Elton*	260
England's Crisis. *Siegfried*	396
Englishman, The. *Dixon*	226
English, The: Are They Human? *Renier*	582
English Medieval Feast, The. *Mead*	434
English Windmills. Vol. I. *Batten*	334
Epic of Jutland, The. *Leslie*	72
Erl King, The. *Granberry*	436
Essay on India, An. *Byron*	470
Europe: The World's Banker, 1870–1914 *Feis*	472
European Encounters: A Travel Note-Book. *Griffith*	368
Evening Light. *Selincourt*	466
Evolution of England, The: A Commentary on the Facts. *Williamson*	Supp. 28.3.31 viii
Exercises in Criticism. *Shillan*	469
Fairbairn of Jesus	332
Family, The. *Müller-Lyer*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
Fancy's Followers. *Davies*	152
Farewell Manchester. *Monkhouse*	584
Far From My Home. *Sitwell*	514
Farm on the River Po, The. *Borsa*	296
Father. *Author of Elizabeth and Her German Garden*	258
Father Malachy's Miracle. *Marshall*	111
Fed Up. *Birmingham*	Supp. 28.3.31 xvi
Fighting Kings of Wessex. *Baker*	32
First Athenian Memories. *Mackenzie*	225
First Gentleman, The. *Thompson*	189
Five Hundred Best English Letters, The. *Birkenhead*	516
Florence Nightingale. *O'Malley*	620
Folk-Tales of all Nations. Edited *Lee*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Forester's Wife, The. *Adamson*	Supp. 28.2.31 xxvi
Foundations of English Prose. *Ward*	469
Four Frightened People. *Robertson*	394
Four Handsome Negresses. *Baptist*	394
Four in Family. *Pakington*	394
Francis. *Lambart*	325
Free Trapper, The. *Linderman*	362
French Novelists from the Revolution to Proust. *Green*	Supp. 28.2.31 xxii
From My Private Diary. *Pless*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
From Panama to Patagonia. *Townsend*	586
From Shikar and Safari. Selected *Baxter*	194
From Surtees to Sassoon. *Darton*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
Fugitive in South-West Africa, A. *Mattenklodt*	Supp. 28.3.31 xvi
Garden, The. *Strong*	26
Gardener's Year, The. *Capek*	Supp. 28.3.31 xiv
George Washington. *Little*	22
The German Submarine War, 1914–1918. *Gibson* and *Prendergast*	363
Go Marry. *Williams*	362
Good Earth, The. *Buck*	430
Grass Roof, The. *Kang*	366
Great English Short Stories. Edited *Melville* and *Hargreaves*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Green Girl. *Johnston*	194
Green Hell. *Duguid*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxiv
Green Memory. *Eldershaw*	287
Giuseppe Verdi. *Toye*	548
Half Way, An Autobiography. *Roberts*	432
Harrow Lectures on Education. *Coade*	Supp. 28.2.31 xxiv
Hartley Coleridge, Poet's Son and Poet. *Hartman*	652
Hatter's Castle. *Cronin*	547
Heart's Unreason, The. *Davison*	72
Higher Command. *Köppen*	664
Highland Fling. *Mitford*	287
Historic Jesus, The. *Mackinnon*	654
History of English Elementary Education, 1760-1902, A. *Smith*	162
History of Ireland and Her People, A. Vol. II. *Hull*	70
History of Later Latin Literature, A. *Wright* and *Sinclair*	158
History of Palestine. *Rappoport*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
History of Peace, The. *Beales*	549
History of the Argentine Republic, A. *Kirkpatrick*	156
History of the Peninsular War. Vol. VII. *Oman*	153
History of Spanish Literature, A. *Mérimée*	666
History of Trade Union Organisation in the North Staffordshire Potteries. *Warburton*	153
Hitler. *Lewis*	469
Honoured Sir From Babujee. *Allan*	550
Hope Against Hope. *Benson*	258
House With the Magnolias. *Arnold*	394
Hundredth Story of A. E. Coppard, The	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Ice in Egypt. *MacCrindle*	325
If—It Had Happened Otherwise. Edited *Squire.*	Supp. 28.2.31 xvi
Impacts. *Goldring*	160
Imperial Treasure. *Gielgud*	472
India on the Brink.	470
Intelligence of Animals, The. *Pitt*	368
In the Days of the Giants. *Doherty*	400
Introduction to Persian Art, An. *Pope*	Supp. 28.2.31 xviii
Invitation to Parnassus and Other Poems. *Bourne*	652
I Sit Alone. *Ager*	394
Jew Süss Oppenheimer. *Elwenspoek*	552
Joseph & Peter. *Gabele*	287
Joseph Pilsudski. Translated *Gillie*	330
Journals of Gilbert White. Edited *Johnson*	470
Journey in England, A. *Binder*	32
Journey to China, A. *Toynbee*	224
Juan in America. *Linklater*	160
Judas. *Metcalfe*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Kinds of Love. *Eastman*	652
King of Men, The. *Miller*	394
Kostia the Kossack. *Krassnoff*	188
Ladybrook. *Farjeon*	188
Lagooned in the Virgin Islands. *Eadie*	668
Lassalle. *Shirokauer*	547
Last Days of Shylock, The. *Lewisohn*	466
Last Straws. *Aldington*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Last Voyage, The. *Hanley*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Last Voyage to St. Kilda, A. *MacGregor*	511
Late of London Wall. *Norman*	325
Lenin. *Mirsky*	618
Lenin. *Vernadsky*	618
Letters of St. Evremond, The. Edited *Hayward*	24
Letters to Schoolmasters. *Felkin*	296
Life and Evolution. *Holmes*	76
Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse, The. *Charteris*	256
Life of Field-Marshal Sir John French, The. *French*	431
Life of the Empress Eugénie, The. *Sencourt*	Supp. 28.3.31 vii
Light-Horse Harry Lee. *Boyd*	472
Limehouse Through Five Centuries. *Birch*	158
Limestone Tree, The. *Hergesheimer*	188
Little America. *Byrd*	30
Little John of Saintré. *Salle*	Supp. 28.3.31 xvi
Little Peter the Great. *Manhood*	Supp. 28.3.31 x
Local Government of the United Kingdom (and the Irish Free State), The. *Clarke*	668
Lockhart's Literary Criticisim	617
London. *Cunningham*	508
London and Its Government. *Harris*	190
London at Home. *Hughes*	226
Long Bondage. *Joseph*	111
Lord Beaverbrook: An Authentic Biography. *Mackenzie*	431
Loving Spirit, The. *du Maurier*	111
L. T. Hobhouse, His Life and Work. *Hobson* and *Ginsberg*	326

REVIEWS—*continued.*

	PAGE
Magnet, The. *Gorki*	583
Man from Limbo, The. *Endore*	152
Man with the Two Mirrors, The. *Knoblock*	547
Maria Fernanda. *Ossa*	615
Mariners of Brittany. *Anson*	668
Market Town. *Limebeer*	325
Marlowe: A Conspectus. *Robertson*	76
Marriage and Money. *Blackburn*	188
Mary Webb: A Short Study of Her Life and Work. *Addison*	554
Masters of Mystery. *Thomson*	334
Mate in Two Moves. *Harley*	554
Memoirs, 1897–1903. *Bülow.* Translated *Voigt*	467
Memoirs of Garibaldi, The. Edited *Dumas.* Translated *Garnett*	468
Memoirs of Marshal Foch, The	223
Memoirs of the Crown Princess Cecilie	160
Men and Buildings. *Gloag*	370
Men and Wives. *Burnett*	258
Men Dislike Women. *Arlen*	325
Mercury Book of Verse, The. *Macmillan*	584
Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist, The. *Eisler*	654
Middle Earth. *Woolsey*	652
Mills of Man, The. *Long*	334
Ming and Magnolia. *Dodd*	547
Mock Turtle. *Brook*	466
Modern Continental Playwrights. *Chandler*	436
Modern Germanies. *Hamilton*	865
Moon Mistress, The: Diane de Poitiers. *Orliac*	122
Moral Ending, A. *Warner* .. Supp. 28.3.31	x
More Culloden Papers. Vol. V. Edited *Warrand*	509
Moving Forward. *Ford*	398
Mr. Kello. *Watson*	394
Mr. Line. *Powey*	325
Mrs. Esmond's Life. *Bates*	400
My Greatest Adventure. *Campbell*	226
My Northcliffe Diary. *Clarke*	395
My Russian Memoirs. *Pares* .. Supp. 28.2.31	xx
Mysterious Madame, The: A Life of Madame Blavatsky. "*Ephesian*"	434
Mystic Will, The. *Brinton* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xxvi
Nature of English Poetry, The. *Harris*	469
Nature of Living Matter, The. *Hogben*	120
Navies of To-day and To-morrow. *Acworth*	656
Navy in India, 1763–1783, The. *Richmond*	656
Negro in American Civilisation, The. *Johnson*	162
Newest Europe. *MacLaughlin*	336
New Model of the Universe, A. *Ouspensky* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xxii
New York. *Morand*	516
Novius Organum. *McKerrow* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xxii
Now at Eve. *Thomas*	72
Occupied: 1918–1930. *Tuohy*	664
Odyssey of an Out-of-Work. *Horsley*	366
100 Red Days. *Sisson*	618
On the Frontier and Beyond. *O'Connor*	436
Other Ranks. *Tilsley*	188
Out of Focus. *Haslip*	514
Out of Soundings. *Tomlinson*	466
Owl in the Attic, The. *Thurber*	550
Oxford Portrait Gallery, An. *Courtney*	294
Pacific, The. *Rogers*	334
Paris. *Bucovich*	260
Parnell Vindicated. *Harrison*	290
Peninsular Europe. *Lyde*	554
Perfect Hostess, The. *Heaton*	258
Persians, The. *Ross* .. Supp. 28.2.31	xviii
Pitiless Youth. *Holstius*	466
Phœnix-Kind, The. *Quennell*	615
Pleasantries of Old Quong, The. *Burke*	160
Pleasures of the Torture Chamber, The. *Swain*	334
Poems (1926–1930). *Graves*	192
Poems and Plays. *Wordsworth*	652
Poems of Wilfred Owen, The. Edited *Blunden*	256
Portrait of a Paladin. *Huidobro*	152
Portrait of Caroline. *Bibesco*	514
Post-Mortem. *Coward* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xiv
Prince Bülow and the Kaiser. *Spectator*	467
Prince-of-all-Work, The. *Chancellor* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xx
Prisoners Under the Sun. *Bauer*	615
Prometheus and Epimetheus. *Spitteler*	226
Prospects of Humanism, The. *Hyde* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xiv
Puritan's Progress. *Train*	226
Ra-Tau, Father of Lions. *Pury*	68
Ravens Enter the House, The. *Burnett* .. Supp. 28.3.31	xvi
Reader, I Married Him. *Green*	188
Realism in Romantic Japan. *Beard* .. Supp. 28.3.31	xii
Recollections of a Defective Memory. *Kerr* Supp. 9.5.31	xxvi
Red like Crimson. *Paradine*	362
Religions of the World. *Clemen*	260
Renée Néré. *Colette*	258
Report on Russian Timber Camps. *Pim* and *Bateson*	581
Richard the Lionheart. *Power*	194
Richer Dust, A. *Jameson*	68
Right and the Good, The. *Ross* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xviii
Rise of General Bonaparte, The. *Wilkinson*	153
Riviera, South-Eastern France and Corsica, The. *Baedeker*	334
Road Back, The. *Remarque*	430
Road to Canaän, The. *Patterson*	516
Rock and Sand. *Oliver* .. Supp. 28.3.31	xvi
Rolling Home. *Barnes*	332
Rousseau. *Vulliamy*	586
Royal Woman, The. *Mann*	26
Russia at Random. *Tweedy*	292
Russia: A Social History. *Mirsky*	22
Russia Unveiled. *Istrati* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xxii
Samuel Pepys, Listener. *Freeman*	118
Saraband. *Bliss*	152
Saturday Night at the Greyhound. *Hampson*	26
Savage Messiah. *Ede*	364
Scented Garden, The. *Rhode* .. Supp. 28.3.31	xvi
Science of Life, The. *Wells, Huxley* and *Wells*	112
Scottish Place-Names. *Mackenzie*	436
Screen, The. *Stokes*	362
Scrutinies: Vol. II. Collected *Rickword*	118
Second Elizabethan Journal, A (1595–1598). *Harrison*	433
Secret of the Bungalow, The. *Casey*	194
Selected Poems. *Rowley*	652
Selections from Macaulay. Edited *Downs* and *Davies.* Supp. 9.5.31	x
Sensitive One, The. *Kitchin*	26
Seven Days' Darkness. *Gunnarsson*	670
Seventh Man, The. *Gibbings* .. Supp. 28.3.31	x
Shakespeare, Chapman, and Sir Thomas More. *Acheson*	550
Seventy Fathoms Deep. *Scott*	552
Sheridan: A Ghost Story. *Butler*	223
Ships in the Bay! *Broster*	152
Shipshape. *Vale*	336
Short History of Biology, A. *Singer*	618
Sibyl of the North, The. *Mackenzie*	666
Since Then. *Gibbs*	190
Sixty Centuries of Health and Physick. *Stubbs* and *Bligh*	363
Sketches in the Life of John Clare .. Supp. 28.3.31	xiv
Smaranda. *Thomson*	622
Some Problems in Ethics. *Joseph* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xviii
Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence. *Murry*	328
So We'll Go No More. *Pember*	624
Spain. *Moran*	670
Spain As It Is. *Gordon*	434
Sphinx. *Converse*	294
Spirit of British Policy, The. *Kantorowicz*	518
Spreading Germs of Hate. *Viereck*	436
Spring Journey, The. *Pryce-Jones*	510
Star Dust. *Murray*	466
State of Shakespeare Study, The. *Robertson*	550
Stock Exchange Official Intelligence, The	334
Story of Architecture in England, The. *Godfrey*	662
Strafford. *Burghclere*	364
Stresemann. *Vallentin*	616
Structure of Thought, The. *Fischer* .. Supp. 9.5.31	xviii
Surrender of an Empire, The. *Webster*	554
Susan Spray. *Kaye-Smith*	111
Swift. *Van Doren*	288
Swinburne. *Chew*	658
Swinburne: A Nineteenth Century Hellene. *Rutland*	658
Sword, The. *Bennett*	652
Their Name Liveth. *Hay*	622
These Characters are Imaginary. *Strachey*	547
These Russians. *White*	292
Things I Remember. *Grand Duchess Marie* Supp. 28.2.31	xx
Three Brothers, The. *Muir*	68
Thunderclap. *Brophy*	287
Time Stood Still. *Cohen-Portheim*	664
Tortured China. *Abend*	124
Trackers and Smugglers in the Deserts of Egypt. *Dumreicher*	668
Tragic Queen, The. *Dakers*	432

REVIEWS—*continued.*

	PAGE
Travel Tales of Mr. Joseph Jorkens, The. *Dunsany*	550
Trial of Dr. Smethurst. *Parry*	624
Trial of William Henry Podmore, The. Edited *Fletcher-Moulton* and *Woodland*	670
Tribute to Michael Faraday, A. *Appleyard*	76
Troublous Times. *Brun*	670
Truth About Dreyfus, The. Edited *Schwertfeyer*	114
Tumult in the North. *Preedy*	296
Tudor Geography. *Taylor*	30
Turi's Book of Lappland. *Turi*	520
Turn of the Day, The. *Angus*	652
Two Prisoners. *Zilahy*	615
U-Boat Stories. *Neureuther* and *Bergen*	Supp. 9.5.31 xxvi
Vagabonds. *Hamsun*	152
ain Love. *Fabricius*	188
Vain Pursuit, A. *Richards*	287
Vale and Other Poems. *A. E.*	652
Vancouver : A Life, 1757–1798. *Godwin*	Supp. 28.2.31 xxiv
Vanished Fleets. *Villiers*	670
Visitant, The. *Tügel*	466
Voice and Personality. *Pear*	622
Volume Two. *Mayo*	668
Voyage, The. *Collard*	652
War and Peace, Vol. I. Translated *Maude*	368
ar, Wine and Women. *Saint-Mandé*	615
Watchings and Wanderings Among Birds. *Gilbert* and *Brook*	396
We Indians. *Schmidt-Paull*	226
Welcome to All This. *Lewis*	550
Whaling in the Antarctic. *Bennett*	552
William Archer : Life, Work and Friendships. *Archer*	581
William Congreve. *Taylor*	620
William Gifford. *Clark*	617
Wind-Labourer, The. *Sawbridge*	152
Winter Comedy. *Thompson*	362
Wissahickon Hills, The. *Weygandt*	334
With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet. *David-Neel*	520
Woman of the Tudor Age, A. *Goff*	30
Woman's Utopia, A. "*A Daughter of Eve*"	368
Women and Children Last. *Nichols*	334
Wordsworth. The Clark Lectures. *Read*	Supp. 28.2.31 xiv
Wordsworth. *Herford*	Supp. 28.2.31 xiv
World's History, The : A Summary. *Tyrrell*	122
World Our Neighbour, The. *Bartlett*	400
Writings of A. E. Coppard, The. *Schwartz*	368
Yankee in Patagonia, A. *Barrett*	586
ehuda. *Levin*	670
Yellow Placard, The. *Lynd*	332
Yofuku : or, Japan in Trousers. *Vines*	Supp. 28.3.31 xii
Youth and Power *Fay*	294

SUPPLEMENTS

Literary, 28th February, 1931.

Spring Announcements, 28th March, 1931.

Budget, 18th April, 1931.

Literary, 9th May, 1931.

Insurance, 23rd May, 1931

Travel, 30th May 1931.

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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . Page 1
THE ALTERNATIVES 4
EDUCATION, THE NEXT STEP 5
THE LAST OF THE LAISSEZ-FAIRISTS. By Oswald Garrison Villard 6
A COUNCIL OF STATE. By Peter Ibbetson . . . 7
IN SPAIN: CABBAGES AND KINGS. By Geoffrey Brereton 8
THE TAILOR ORDERS HIS TOMB. By Y. Y. . . 9
A LESSON FROM HISTORY. By J. L. Hammond . 10
THE BURDEN OF DISARMAMENT. By MacFlecknoe 12
CORRESPONDENCE 12
ALL ABOUT BOOKS. By Virginia Woolf . . 14
MILTON AND PRYNNE. By Dorothy Margaret Stuart 15
MAKING A FIRE. By Walter de la Mare . Page 17
THE KISS. By Edmund Blunden 17
PLAYS AND PICTURES 17
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By Richard Sunne . . 20
REVIEWS:
First President. By H. W. Nevinson . . 22
Russia and the Russians. By Leonard Woolf. 22
The Complete Epicurean. By R. A. Scott-James 24
New Novels. By Proteus 26
Discovery by Flight 30
Two Books on Tudor England 30
SHORTER NOTICES 32
ABOUT MOTORING. By R. E. Davidson . . . 34
PLAYTIME. By Caliban 36
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Toreador . . . 40
SPECIAL LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.

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THE negotiations of this country with France and Italy regarding the limitation of naval armaments have gathered an unexpected momentum during the week. The situation, as we go to press, is one of great interest, importance, and obscurity. The London Treaty left the position extremely unsatisfactory both between France and this country and between France and Italy. The demand of France for a total margin of 244,000 tons over the total tonnage of the Italian fleet not only made agreement with Italy impossible, but introduced complications with the British figures. If Italy and France were to be brought into the Treaty, therefore, it was first necessary to obtain a modification of the French demands. This was the object of Mr. Craigie's preliminary negotiations in Paris. These were so hopeful that Mr. Henderson and Mr. Alexander crossed the channel on Monday to continue them with the French Ministers. Again things moved rapidly, and on Tuesday the British negotiators went on to Rome. The air is full of rumours, many tendencious. It seems to be certain, however, that a modification of the total tonnage demands of the French has been obtained, which makes an agreement with Italy possible. That would be a real achievement, for without it a naval armaments race between the two countries is the unpleasant prospect. It is also stated that France has agreed to reduce her original submarine figures. This is the bright side of the picture; the dark is represented by the rumours that the French consent has been purchased by British "concessions," *e.g.*, by support of French military demands. It is to be hoped that these are among the tendencious rumours—they come from the French Press, which so often takes the will for the deed—for there are some prices too high to pay even for an agreement between France and Italy.

* * *

Mr. Churchill has long been hailed in many quarters as the future leader of the Conservative Party. He is not popular with back benchers, he is not an orthodox protectionist, and his temperament and frequent changes of front have rendered his authority distasteful to the rank and file of his party. But his supremacy on the platform and in Parliament, combined with the divisions in the Conservative ranks on the subject of India have given him his long-sought opportunity. He is known to have resigned from his "shadow" Cabinet as a protest against Mr. Baldwin's flabbiness, and on Wednesday, at a meeting of the Central Council of the Conservative Party, an "emergency resolution" moved by Commander Locker-Lampson gave him scope for a brilliant flank attack. The resolution, urging a "strong stand for law and order" in India was carried unanimously; and in carrying it, Mr. Churchill reasserts